

Abstract 665

TITLE: Who's Invisible: The Marginalization of Women in HIV Prevention Efforts

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ISSUE: Females at risk for HIV have been narrowly defined by their childbearing status. Extensive HIV prevention efforts and federal and state legislative initiatives have emphasized the identification of pregnant women who are HIV+ for the purpose of initiating early treatment to prevent HIV infection in the infant.

SETTING: HIV Prevention Policy in the United States

PROJECT/RESULTS: Narrowly defining women to a childbearing capacity marginalizes women who need HIV prevention resources due to activities that place them at risk and not pregnancy status. I will discuss that the construction of women as childbearers symbolizes the dichotomous way women have been viewed in society and in previous public health prevention activities. Specifically, STD educational literature developed during World Wars I and II for the military will be reviewed. In these material, women were viewed as the carriers of disease and were commonly portrayed as the enemy.

LESSONS LEARNED: Defining women by childbearing status excludes women (including seniors) and focuses prevention resources on reproductive ability not risk behaviors. This approach signifies that women are only important to society if fertile and then the emphasis is to save the fetus/infant not prevent women from HIV infection in the first place.

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